

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## Fiscal Year 2018 / ML 2017 Request for Funding



Date: May 26, 2016

Program or Project Title: Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex - Phase VII (PA05)

Funds Requested: \$2,054,900

Manager's Name: Robert McGillivray

Organization: The Trust for Public Land

Address: 2610 University Ave.

Address 2: #300

City: St. Paul, MN 55114

Office Number: 651-999-5307

Email: rjm@tpl.org

County Locations: Goodhue, Le Sueur, and Rice.

Regions in which work will take place:

- Prairie

Activity types:

- Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

- Wetlands
- Forest
- Prairie
- Habitat

### Abstract:

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase VII program will protect in fee and restore approximately 320 acres of high priority wildlife habitat within and near the Cannon River Watershed, including wetlands, prairies, Big Woods forest, and river/shallow lake shoreline. Its goal is to reverse habitat loss, prevent degradation of water quality, improve watershed function, and provide public access.

### Design and scope of work:

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase VII program will prevent degradation and loss of quality habitat in the Prairie section of the State, specifically the Cannon River Watershed. In addition, it will increase the amount of available public lands for hunting and angling opportunities within an easy drive for over half of the State's population.

Located south of the Twin Cities, the Cannon River Watershed has seen increased development pressure due to the I-35 corridor and the Cannon Lakes, and much of this area has already suffered fragmentation and habitat loss. Historically inhabited by Big Woods, the landscape is now dominated by agricultural fields and, to a lesser extent, development. Agricultural practices and shoreline development are the major contributors to the impaired status of stretches of the Cannon River and its associated lakes and streams. The DNR's Southern Region Conservation Focus Area assessment tool ranked the Cannon River area as having the highest level of interdivisional conservation priority when examined at the landscape level.

This conservation effort is part of a multi-year strategy that includes acquisition, protection, and restoration of core parcels of land that will contribute to a large complex of restored prairies, grasslands, wetlands, lakeshore, and river shoreline.

Acquisitions are targeted toward existing large wetland/upland complexes, rare communities (Big Woods forest, tamarack swamp),

shallow lakes, river shoreline, and lands adjacent to existing protected areas. There is an effort underway which involves several partners (including The Cannon River Watershed Partnership, The Nature Conservancy and MN DNR) for landscape planning in the Cannon River watershed. This effort is expected to help the partnership further identify priority conservation opportunities and protection strategies for high biodiversity areas.

Protecting and restoring vegetative cover within basins and the riparian areas of the lakes, rivers and streams in this focus area will also help protect water quality by reducing surface water runoff and by providing ecological services such as infiltration through natural buffers to our waterways. All wildlife, and humans, will benefit from improved water quality.

Work will be completed in phases depending on funding availability and landowner willingness to sell. Properties targeted for acquisition and restoration as part of this Phase VII request to LSOHC (FY18) can be found in the parcel list below. With the transactions scheduled to close in June 2016, this program has created five new WMAs, and an addition to an existing WMA, in the Cannon River Watershed. This has resulted in 1,692 new acres of publicly accessible, permanently protected habitat.

The Cannon River Headwaters Habitat Complex effort is supported by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, the Dark House Anglers Southern Chapter, the Izaak Walton League Owatonna Chapter, Minnesota Deer Hunters Association South Central Prairieland Bucks Chapter (Le Sueur, Rice, Waseca, and Steele Counties), Minnesota Waterfowl Association – Scott-Le Sueur Chapter, Montgomery Sportsmen’s Club, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants Forever – Le Sueur County Chapter, the Tri-Lake Sports Club, Waterville Sportsman’s Club, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Which sections of the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan are applicable to this project:**

- H1 Protect priority land habitats
- H2 Protect critical shoreland of streams and lakes

### **Which other plans are addressed in this proposal:**

- Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years
- Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

### **Describe how your program will advance the indicators identified in the plans selected:**

This program's efforts to protect wetland/upland complexes, grasslands, and prairie and shoreline habitat further the goals of both "Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years" and "Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework". As stated in the WMA acquisition plan, key habitat areas have been identified across the State by the Division of Wildlife, and in order to ensure adequate wildlife lands for future generations, an additional 439,000 acres of new WMAs need to be acquired. In addition, The OHF: A 25 Year Framework notes that of the 18% habitat remaining in the Prairie, which the Cannon River Watershed falls within, only 6% is permanently protected. This program supports the protection efforts necessary to enhance existing, and create new, WMAs that provide critical wildlife habitat that is lacking in the Cannon River Watershed due to its vicinity to intensive agriculture and development pressures.

### **Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this proposal:**

#### **Prairie:**

- Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

### **Describe how your program will produce and demonstrate a significant and permanent conservation legacy and/or outcomes for fish, game, and wildlife as indicated in the LSOHC priorities:**

Our program, through land protection, will prevent degradation and loss of quality habitat in the Prairie section of the State, specifically the Cannon River Watershed. It will increase the amount of available public lands for hunting and angling opportunities within an easy drive for over half of the state’s population, and will lead to large complexes of restored prairies, grasslands, wetlands, lakeshore, and river shoreline which will reduce flood potential and degradation of aquatic habitat.

### **Describe how the proposal uses science-based targeting that leverages or expands corridors and complexes, reduces fragmentation or protects areas identified in the MN County Biological Survey:**

This program uses the Minnesota County Biological Survey, and other GIS data analysis tools to identify priority lands for protection and restoration to create and expand conservation corridors and habitat complexes. In addition, we will consult watershed wide landscape planning efforts as discussed above and the Cannon River Watershed - Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) to

further identify critical lands in need of protection.

## How does the proposal address habitats that have significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, and/or threatened or endangered species, and list targeted species:

The areas targeted by the Trust for Public Land have been identified and prioritized through state, regional and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity qualities and connectivity. Their protection will occur through fee title acquisition, and will target Big Woods, oak savannas, wetlands and sensitive shoreline communities within the Cannon River watershed.

Protection and restoration of these significant parcels will provide critical habitat for game species, including migratory waterfowl (mallards, canvasback, wood ducks, hooded mergansers, pintails, and lesser scaup), upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock), white tail deer, and fish (northern pike, black crappies, bluegills, and walleye). Protection will also provide access for a diversity of recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey and deer hunting as well as river, stream, and lake fishing. The nongame wildlife, including species in Greatest Conservation Need, that also benefit from this effort includes Bald Eagle, Bell's Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike, Sandhill Crane, Red-headed Woodpecker, Greater Yellowlegs, Buffbreasted Sandpiper, Blanding's Turtle, Mudpuppies, and the Giant Floater, a species of freshwater mussel.

## Identify indicator species and associated quantities this habitat will typically support:

Several species have been temporarily identified by the DNR to represent various prairie/grassland habitat indicator species: pheasant, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, and monarch butterfly. The metrics are derived from existing data sources and/or scientific literature, but are gross averages; they are not accurate at a site-specific scale. Therefore, they are not intended to be used to score or rank requests, but represent the best information we have for immediate support to the Council's objective.

### Pheasant

By looking at the ratios of CRP acres in Minnesota to pheasant harvest, we can estimate that every three acres of grassland habitat has the potential to produce one harvested pheasant rooster.

### Bobolink and Grasshopper Sparrow

The breeding territory size of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows is estimated at 1.7 and 2.1 acres respectively in high quality habitat. If all of the habitat was occupied, a 100 acres of habitat could potentially hold approximately 60 and 48 pairs of bobolinks and grasshopper sparrows respectively.

### Monarch Butterfly

Research from the University of Minnesota has shown that it takes approximately 30 milkweed result in one monarch butterfly contributing to the overwintering Mexican population. Grasslands can have between 100-250 milkweed stems per acre. An acre of restored or enhanced grassland could potentially contribute 3 to 8 monarchs to the population.

## Outcomes:

### Programs in prairie region:

- Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife *Core parcels are identified in partnership with the DNR as well as the partners of the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex. Success will be determined based on the acreage of lands protected, and the percentage of protected lands in the watershed.*

## How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended:

Once the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex lands have been acquired and conveyed to the DNR to be managed as a WMA and/or AMA, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration work are included in this proposal. The Trust for Public Land will work with DNR to complete a restoration plan and implementation of that plan will be completed in the following years. The property will be managed for the long term as a WMA and/or AMA and will be maintained by the Minnesota DNR according to their WMA and AMA guidelines.

## Explain the things you will do in the future to maintain project outcomes:

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2018	OHF and DNR Fish and Wildlife	Post property as DNR WMA or AMA	Develop restoration/management plan for property	
2019	DNR Fish and Wildlife	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	
2020	DNR Fish and Wildlife	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation		

## What is the degree of timing/opportunistic urgency and why it is necessary to spend public money for this work as soon as possible:

Sensitive land in the Cannon River Watershed continues to be converted to rural residential development and agricultural production. This area has also been losing CRP lands at a very high rate. Protection and proper stewardship of high natural resource land is important for maintaining what is left of the region's unimpaired waters and increasing vital habitat opportunities. Protecting this land is critical before it becomes further degraded due to development and agricultural pressures.

## How does this proposal include leverage in funds or other effort to supplement any OHF appropriation:

US Fish and Wildlife Service State Wildlife Grant funds will be sought to perform restoration activities on parcels acquired through this program.

## Relationship to other funds:

- Environmental and Natural Resource Trust Fund

## Describe the relationship of the funds:

This effort is seeking the significant portion of funding for acquisition and initial restoration work from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Past matching funds have been provided from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund as part of the Statewide Habitat Corridors Partnership.

## Describe the source and amount of non-OHF money spent for this work in the past:

Appropriation Year	Source	Amount
2011	ENRTF	350000
2012	ENRTF	200000
2012	RIM	105000
2013	RIM	200000

## Activity Details

### Requirements:

If funded, this proposal will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056 - **Yes**

Will local government approval be sought prior to acquisition - **No**

Local governments will be informed of the project and project managers will be made available for questions.

Is the land you plan to acquire free of any other permanent protection - **Yes**

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program - **No**

### Land Use:

Will there be planting of corn or any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program - **Yes**

Explain

For lands acquired that are conveyed as WMAs to the DNR, the DNR has indicated the following:

The primary purposes of WMAs are to develop and manage for the production of wildlife and for compatible outdoor recreation. To fulfill those goals, the DNR may use limited farming specifically to enhance or benefit the management of state lands for wildlife.

Lands proposed to be acquired as WMAs may utilize farming to prepare previously farmed sites for native plant seeding. This is a standard practice across the Midwest. On a small percentage of WMAs (less than 2.5%), DNR uses farming to provide a winter food source for a variety of wildlife species in agriculture-dominated landscapes largely devoid of winter food sources.

Are any of the crop types planted GMO treated - **Yes**

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing - **No**

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion - **Yes**

N/A. All lands acquired will be open to public hunting and fishing.

Are there currently trails or roads on any of the acquisitions on the parcel list - **No**

Will new trails or roads be developed as a result of the OHF acquisition - **No**

## Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Approximate Date Completed
Landowner negotiations, agreements and due diligence	June 30, 2020
Land acquired	June 30, 2020
Initial site development/restoration	Fall 2020

# Budget Spreadsheet

**Total Amount of Request: \$2,054,900**

## Budget and Cash Leverage

Budget Name	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$138,000	\$66,000	Private	\$204,000
Contracts	\$70,000	\$0		\$70,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	\$1,707,400	\$100,000	Various State, Local and Private Funds	\$1,807,400
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Acquisition	\$0	\$0		\$0
Easement Stewardship	\$0	\$0		\$0
Travel	\$3,000	\$0		\$3,000
Professional Services	\$40,000	\$0		\$40,000
Direct Support Services	\$46,500	\$46,500	Private Funds	\$93,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	\$20,000	\$0		\$20,000
Capital Equipment	\$0	\$0		\$0
Other Equipment/Tools	\$0	\$0		\$0
Supplies/Materials	\$0	\$0		\$0
DNR IDP	\$30,000	\$0		\$30,000
Total	\$2,054,900	\$212,500		\$2,267,400

## Personnel

Position	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection and Legal Staff	0.45	3.00	\$138,000	\$66,000	Private	\$204,000
Total	0.45	3.00	\$138,000	\$66,000		\$204,000

Amount of Request: \$2,054,900  
 Amount of Leverage: \$212,500  
 Leverage as a percent of the Request: 10.34%  
 DSS + Personnel: \$184,500  
 As a % of the total request: 8.98%  
 Easement Stewardship: \$0  
 As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -%

**How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program:**

Our DSS request is based upon our federal rate which has been approved by the DNR.

**Does the amount in the contract line include R/E work?**

A portion of the contracts may be used for initial restoration on parcels acquired through this program.

**Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental? - Yes**

**Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging:**

Travel is limited to mileage, rental car expense and some food.

**Describe and explain leverage source and confirmation of funds:**

The Trust for Public Land has committed to contributing staff fringe costs and one half of its DSS as leverage for this proposal. Leverage for fee acquisition is expected in the form of partial donation of the appraised value of the parcel(s).

**Does this proposal have the ability to be scalable? - Yes**

**Tell us how this project would be scaled and how administrative costs are affected, describe the "economy of scale" and how outputs would change with reduced funding, if applicable:**

A reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally. Program management costs would be the exception, due to program development and oversight remaining somewhat consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

## Output Tables

**Table 1a. Acres by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	89	105	62	64	320
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	89	105	62	64	320

**Table 1b. How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie?**

Type	Native Prairie
Restore	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0
Protect in Easement	0
Enhance	0
Total	0

**Table 2. Total Requested Funding by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$430,900	\$826,000	\$308,000	\$490,000	\$2,054,900
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$430,900	\$826,000	\$308,000	\$490,000	\$2,054,900

**Table 3. Acres within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	320	0	320
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	320	0	320

**Table 4. Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest	Total
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,054,900	\$0	\$2,054,900
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,054,900	\$0	\$2,054,900



**Table 5. Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type**

Type	Wetlands	Prairies	Forest	Habitats
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$4,842	\$7,867	\$4,968	\$7,656
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Table 6. Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section**

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	Northern Forest
Restore	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,422	\$0
Protect in Fee W/O State PILT Liability	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Protect in Easement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enhance	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles**

2

I have read and understand Section 15 of the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Minnesota Statute 97A.056, and the Call for Funding Request. I certify I am authorized to submit this proposal and to the best of my knowledge the information provided is true and accurate.

# Parcel List

## Explain the process used to select, rank and prioritize the parcels:

The Trust for Public Land considers a variety of factors in selecting and prioritizing our parcels. These factors include, but are not limited to:

Whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species. Whether the land would provide quality public recreational opportunities, especially for hunting and fishing. The presence of unique plants and animals species, including those in greatest conservation need as identified by the Areas of Significance Native Biodiversity and the County Biological Survey. Whether protection of the property is a priority for our public conservation partners. Whether protection of the property supports the goals of local, regional, state, and federal conservation plans. Whether the land is adjacent to, or near, other public land or protect habitat complexes. Whether there is local support for protection of the property among citizens and elected officials. Whether the resource is actually threatened, and if so, the immediacy of the threat. Whether there is a landowner who is willing to sell at a price that is at or below fair market value, and in a time frame that is feasible. Whether a public conservation partner is willing to accept the property and it meets their objectives (WMA, AMA, SNA, Forestry, County, etc.).

## Section 1 - Restore / Enhance Parcel List

No parcels with an activity type restore or enhance.

## Section 2 - Protect Parcel List

### Goodhue

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Warsaw WMA	11118207	120	\$480,000	No	Full	Full

### Le Sueur

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Dora Lake (tract 5)	11023210	125	\$361,000	No	Full	Full
German Lake AMA (tracts 1-2)	11024232	109	\$600,000	No	Full	Full
Horseshoe Lake AMA (tracts 3-5)	10923212	127	\$800,000	No	Full	Full

### Rice

Name	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection?	Hunting?	Fishing?
Boyd Sartell WMA (tract 3)	11022210	75	\$255,000	No	Full	Full
Caron Lake AMA (tract 1)	11022229	80	\$480,000	No	Full	Full
Caron Lake WMA (tracts 4-8)	11022232	586	\$1,550,000	No	Full	Full
Hands Marsh WMA	10923212	40	\$200,000	No	Full	Full
Kelley Dudley WMA/AMA	11021207	240	\$750,000	No	Full	Full
Le Tamaracque WMA (tract 28)	11022218	200	\$750,000	No	Full	Full
Turkek Marsh WMA (tract 1)	11122232	83	\$375,000	No	Full	Full
Weinberger Lake WMA	10922201	31	\$200,000	No	Full	Full

## Section 2a - Protect Parcel with Bldgs

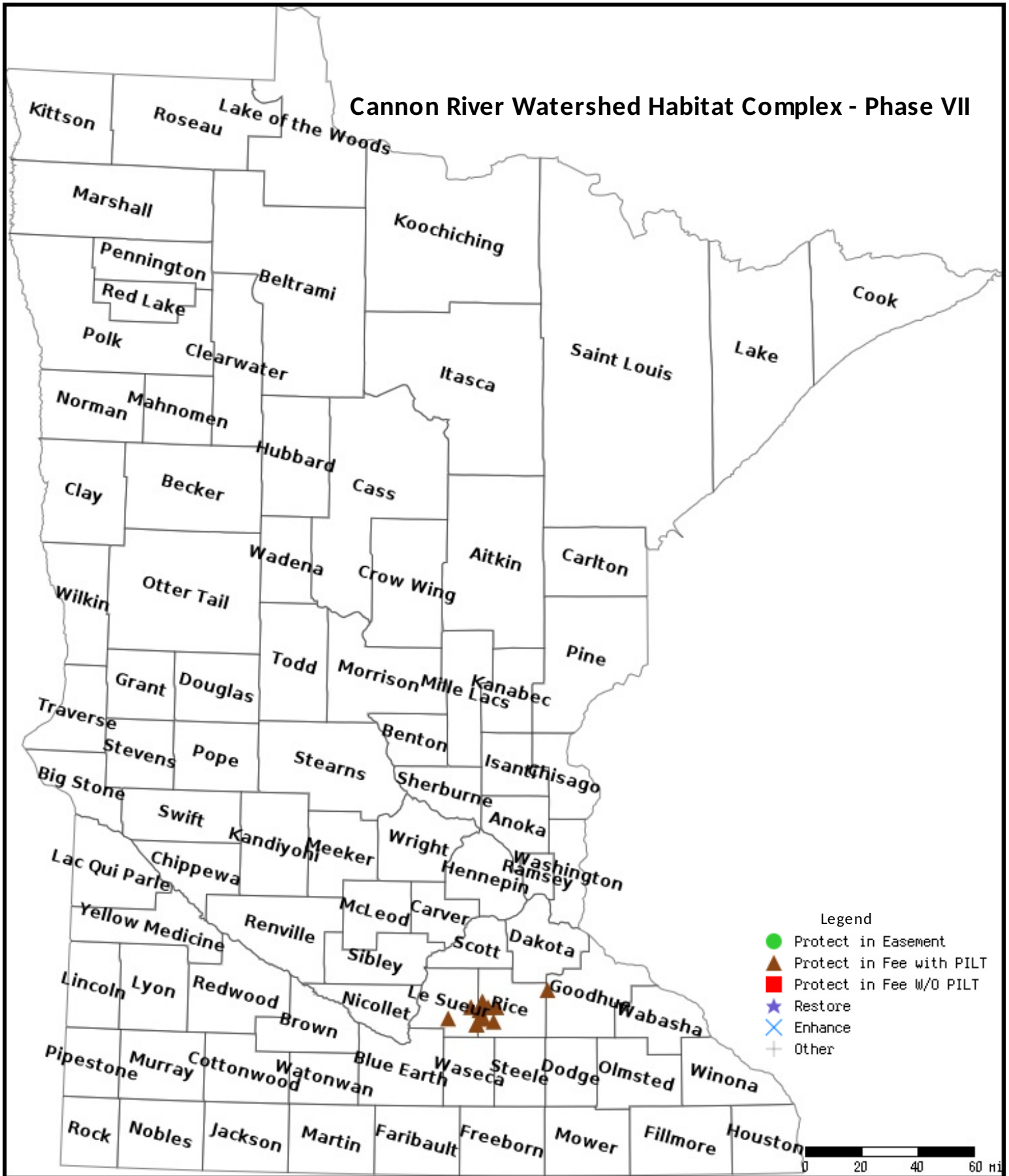
No parcels with an activity type protect and has buildings.

## Section 3 - Other Parcel Activity

No parcels with an other activity type.

# Parcel Map

## Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex - Phase VII



Data Generated From Parcel List

# Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex – Phase VII

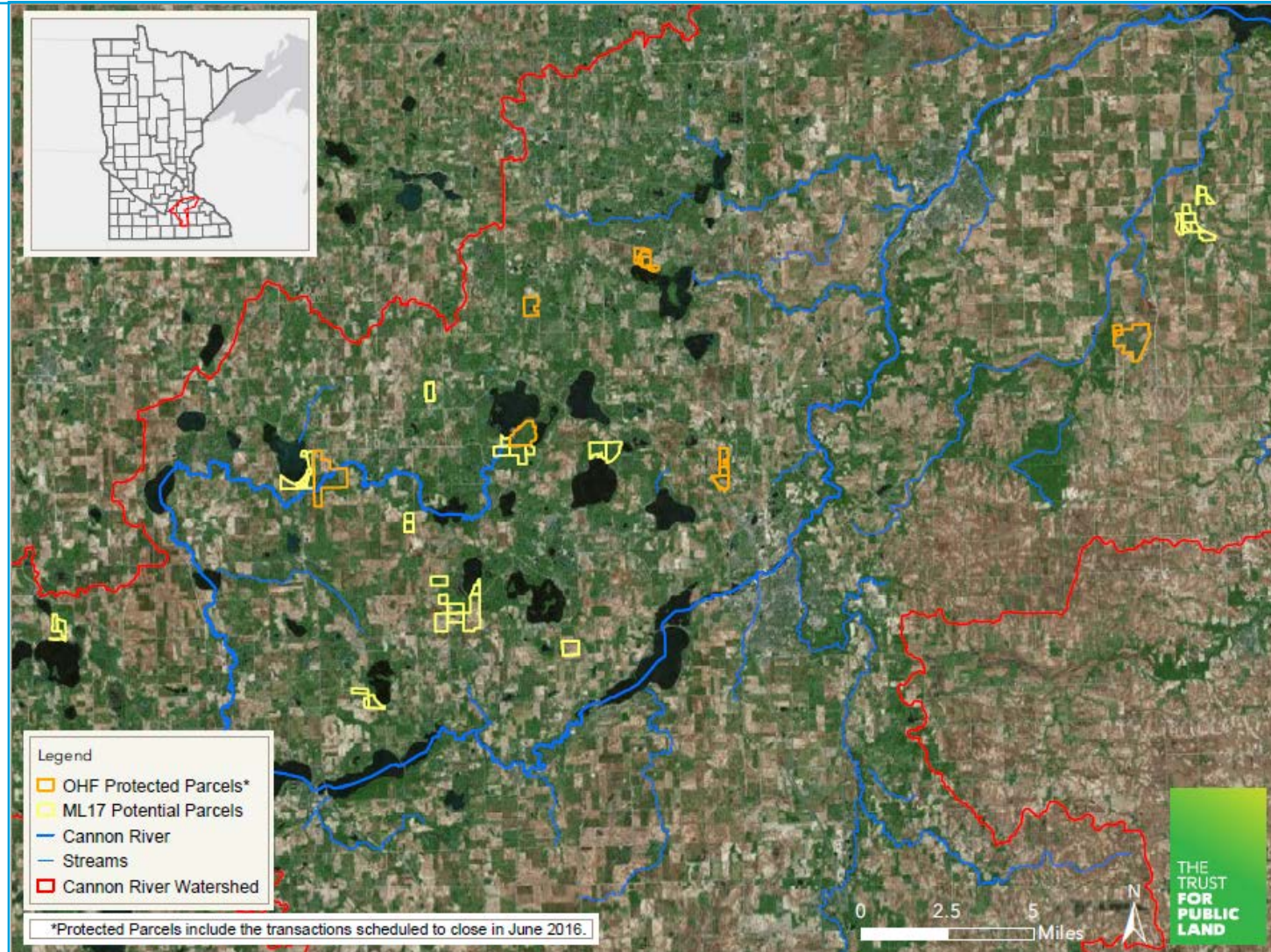
The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex program protects high priority wildlife habitat within the Cannon River Watershed, including wetlands, prairies, Big Woods forest, and river/shallow lake shoreline. Its goal is to reverse habitat loss, prevent degradation of water quality, improve watershed function and provide public access. Located just south of the Twin Cities metro in an area that has seen high development pressure due to the close proximity of the Twin Cities, I-35 and the Upper Cannon Lakes, much of this part of the State has already suffered fragmentation and habitat loss. Historically inhabited by Big Woods, the landscape is now dominated by agricultural fields and, to a lesser extent, development.

## Proposal Summary:

- Cannon River Watershed Habitat Complex Phase VII – Outdoor Heritage Fund Request: \$2,054,000
- With Phase VII funds, this program will protect approximately 320 acres. All fee-title acquisition projects are coordinated with DNR Wildlife and Fisheries.

## Results to Date:

- Created 5 new WMAs and expanded the existing Boyd Sartell WMA
- Permanently protected 1,692 acres (97% of goal)





**Dora Lake WMA** – Utilizing M.L. 11 LSOHC funds, 510 acres was protected and conveyed to the MN DNR as a new WMA. Located near Kilkenny, Dora Lake WMA is mainly comprised of upland forest with a restored oak savannah and prairie.



**Prairie Creek WMA** – Utilizing M.L. 12 and M.L. 13 LSOHC funds, 462 acres was protected and conveyed to the MN DNR as a new WMA. Located near Dennison, Prairie Creek WMA consists of steep rolling topography and prairie grassland with rock outcrops. Grassland habitats blend into hardwood forests associated with Prairie Creek and Nerstrand Woods. This WMA is on an ecotone between prairie and woodlands offering good opportunities for viewing both prairie and woodland fauna and flora.



**Boyd Sartell WMA** – Utilizing M.L. 11 and M.L. 12 LSOHC funds, 227 acres was protected and conveyed to the MN DNR as an addition to the Boyd Sartell WMA. This property contains diverse marsh habitats and about 100 acres of uplands consisting of oak islands and grassy knolls, Big Woods and tamarack forests. In addition, it protects seasonally flooded wetlands and other key habitats for waterfowl and wetland wildlife ranging from sedge wrens and ring-necked ducks to sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans.